

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CABLE FROM PAVIA

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1. THE UNDERLYING ECONOMIC SITUATION IN PAVIA IS BOTH CLEARER AND BETTER THAN THE POLITICAL. SINCE OUR LAST VISIT FIVE MONTHS AGO, THERE IS SOME IMPROVEMENT IN THE OBJECTIVE ECONOMICCLIMATE BUT THE POLITICAL OUTLOOK CONTINUES TO BE PREVALENTLY NEGATIVE FOR THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND THE MINOR PARTIES, OVER WHOM THE LOCKHEED SCANDAL HANGS OMINOUSLY. THE COMMUNISTS AND POSSIBLY TPE SOCIALISTS HAVE BRIGHTER PROSPECTS.

2. DISCUSSIONS WITH TEN WELL PLACED PARTY TRADE UNION, UNIVERSITY AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON APRIL 22 LEAVE AN IMPRESSION THAT PAVIA IS SOMEWHAT OF A BACKWATER COMPARED TO ITS GIANT MILAN NEIGHBOR ONLY A HALF HOUR DISTANT. THERE IS MUCH LESS A SENSE OF DYNAMISM AMONG PAVIA'S 86000 INHABITANTS THAN IN OTHER MILAN SATELLITE CITIES LIKE VARESE, OMO, BRESCIA OR BERGAMO. STILL, THE ECONOMY IS ON THE UPSWING - HOWEVER GRUDGINGLY THAT IS CONCEDED BY PARTY OR TRADE UNION LEADERS. IN NOVEMBER, THE NECCHI SEWING MACHINE COMPANY WAS FLOUNDERING IN THE WAKE OF THE DEATH OF OWNER NECCHI AND THERE WAS DANGER OF ITS FAILURE. TODAY, IT APPEARS TO

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HAVE STRAIGHTENED UP AND IS NO LONGER A LOCAL CONCERN. THE

SHOE SECTOR IS WORKING AT FULL TILT. PRESIDENT FORD'S REJECTION OF A RISE IN FOOTWEAR DUTIES IS WELL KNOWN AND APPRECIATED FOR ITS ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL MEANING. AGRICULTURE IS HAVING A GOOD YEAR.

3. THIS CONCLUSION SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT THE PAVESI ARE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE ECONOMY. THE ATTITUDE OF OUR INTERLOUCTIONS IS QUITE DIFFERENT. THE EMOTIONAL BURDEN OF OPINION IS THAT THE ECONOMY IS A DISASTER. IN PAVIA, PERCEPTION OF THE NATIONAL SITUATION IS THE DOMINANT THEME. AND THAT PERCEPTION IS ONE OF DEEP GLOOM, DISCOURAGEMENT AND HOSTILITY TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. LOCAL LEADERS TAKE THEIR RELATIVE PROSPERITY AS AN EXCEPTION TO THE NATIONAL RULE AND AS A RESULT OF THE MERIT OF UNUSUALLY ABLE LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS, HARD WORKING LDBOR AND OTHER UNIQUE LOCAL FACTORS. IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH CENTRAL GOVERNMENT POLICY WHICH IS, IF ANYTHING, DESCRIBED AS AN OBSTACLE TO LOCAL RECOVERY.

4. THE POLITICAL SITUATION IS HARDER TO JUDGE. THERE IS A GENERALIZED VIEW AMONG ALL BUT THE SOCIALISTS THAT, IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE. THE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY, WHICH ENROLLS ALMOST A FIFTH OF THE TOTAL CITY POPULATION, CAN'T BELIEVE THAT THE PUBLIC WILL INCREASE THE COMMUNIST VOTE OVER JUNE 1975. NEITHER CAN THE VICE CHANCELLOR OR THE HEAD OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OR THE DC PROVINCIAL SECRETARY OR THE SECRETARY OF THE SMALL FARM OWNERS UNION OR THE CISL OR UIL SECRETARIES. ON THE OTHER HAND, FEW OF THEM CAN SEE WHY ANYONE SHOULD VOTE FOR THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. IF THE COMMUNISTS ARE HELD TO THEIR JUNE 1975 VOTE LOCALLY, IT WILL BE LESS BECAUSE OF THE MERITS OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS THAN BECAUSE OF FEAR OF THE COMMUNISTS.

5. THE LOCAL STANDING OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS IS VERY POOR. THE PARTY CONTINUES TO BE LED BY MEN IN THEIR SIXTIES WITH ALL THAT IMPLIES FOR ENERGY AND RAPPORT WITH THE YOUNGER VOTER. AND THE DC NATIONAL CONGRESS HAS NOT IMPROVED THE NATIONAL PARTY IMAGE. WHILE THE LOCAL SECRETARY CLAIMED THAT THE PARTY HAD BEEN STRENGTHENED BY THE ELECTION OF FANFANI AS PARTY PRESIDENT, OTHERS DESPAIRED. WHATEVER BENEFIT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ATTAINED BY THE ELECTION OF ZACCAGNINI SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN WASHED AWAY BY EVENTS SINCE THE ROME CONGRESS.

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6. ABOVE ALL, THE LOCKHEED SCANDAL HAS THE NON-COMMUNISTS IN PAVIA VERY JUMPY. THE CLEAR IMPLICATION OF PRESIDENT LEONE OR A DC PRIME MINISTER, WOULD BE A DISASTER FOR LOCAL DC HOPES. BUT ALMOST AS BAD WOULD BE THAT THE ENTIRE PARTY SHOULD FACE THE ELECTIONS UNDER THE PRESENT CLOUD OF HIGH CORRUPTION. LITTLE WONDER THAT THE PROSPECT OF NATIONAL ELECTIONS NOW IS VERY BAD NEWS FOR THE LOCAL DC ORGANIZATION.

7. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP - PARTY, UNION, FARMER, INDUSTRIAL - SAYS THAT LOSSES CAN BE HELD TO JUNE 1975 LEVELS IF THERE IS NO MAJOR SCANDAL, IF THERE CAN BE A CLEAN SWEEP OF OLD FACES NATIONALLY, IF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CAN POUR MONEY INTO LOCAL PROJECTS.

8. HOW MUCH TRADE UNION SUPPORT THE PAVIA CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS CAN EXPECT HAS BECOME MORE PROBLEMATIC SINCE NOVEMBER. AT THAT TIME

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A RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN CISL AND THE PARTY WAS IN THE MAKING. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, THE LEFT WING OF THE CISL HAS UNSEATED ITS LONG TIME, MIDDLE OF THE ROAD SECRETARY AND INSTALLED A YOUNGER AND LESS EXPERIENCED MAN WHO MAY NOT BE ABLE TO CONTINUE THE PROCESS OF RAPPROCHEMENT EARLIER BEGUN.

9. THE PAVIA SOCIALISTS CONTINUE THEIR MILITANTLY ANTI-DC POLICY EVEN IF THEY ARE PRIVATELY CRITICAL OF THE COMMUNISTS. THEIR SECRETARY KNEW OF THE CLAIRE STERLING ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES ON PCI FINANCING AND AGREED THAT THE PARTY HAD CONCEALED INCOME. THE LOCAL COMMUNIST-SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT OF PAVIA IS MAKING A RESPECTABLE IF NOT BRIALLIANT SHOWING. THE LOCAL PSI EXPECTS TO GAIN A POINT OR A POINT AND A HALF COMPARED TO JUNE 1975, THE COMMUNISTS TO GAIN SLIGHTLY, AND THE FAR LEFT FACTIONS TO POLL A FAIR VOTE THAT WOULD GIVE THE LEFT AS A WHOLE A SIGNIFICANT GAIN.

10. IT IS HARDLY A GOOD OMEN THAT BOTH SOCIALISTS AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS ALMOST ALWAYS SCORN THE OTHER MOST, ALTHOUGH BOTH ADMIT THAT AFTER THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS THEY WILL HAVE TO ALLY TO FORM A GOVERNMENT OR RISK THE OTHER DOING JUST THAT WITH THE COMMUNISTS. ONE HAS THE UNCOMFORTABLE FEELING THAT AS THE MUTUAL DISTASTE OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND SOCIALISTS GROWS, THE COMMUNISTS LOOK INCREASINGLY ATTRACTIVE TO BOTH.

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11. AT A MOMENT WHEN OUR CONTACTS IN PAVIA SAY THAT ITALY IS AT THE EVE OF ITS MOST CRUCIAL POST WAR ELECTION IN THE DEPTHS OF ITS MOST SERIOUS ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CRISIS, THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE THAT THE COMMUNIST-SOCIALIST LEFT WILL NOT MAKE FURTHER GAINS COMPARED TO JUNE 1975.FINA

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